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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 9 February 2010 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Recent actions perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinian and international peace activists in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, reveal an aggressive, disturbing pattern to which the international community must be alerted. Such actions are yet another manifestation of Israel's intransigence with regard to pursuit of its illegal policies and practices against the Palestinian people, its arrogant impunity, and its intolerance of any protest or demonstrations, including such non-violent resistance, against its illegal and oppressive actions.

In addition to the constant aggression by the Israeli occupying forces against the weekly Palestinian protests against the Wall in villages such as Ni'lin and Bi'lin, in recent weeks Israel has intensified its targeting of Palestinian and international peace activists, with a rise in confrontations against and the detention and arrest of numerous activists. Yesterday, Monday, 8 February, at 1 a.m. (Palestine time) Israeli occupying forces raided the Ramallah office of the Popular Committee against the Wall and Settlement Construction, ransacking the Committee's office and confiscating its equipment, archives and property. The four-hour raid resulted in substantial physical damage and the theft of the Committee's extensive archive and documentation of Israeli violations of international humanitarian law, particularly with regard to the ongoing construction of the settlements and the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem.

We wish to highlight our concern at the increasing assaults being launched by Israel, the occupying Power, against non-violent resistance by Palestinian and international peace activists against the illegal Wall in specific. The latest raid was carried out less than 24 hours after the occupying forces had raided Ramallah, where they apprehended and detained two international activists from their home. The two activists, 25-year-old Ariadna Jove Marti of Spain and 22-year-old Bridgette Chappel from Australia, were both members of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM). This is the second such incident in which Israeli occupying forces

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launched an incursion into a Palestinian city for the purpose of detaining international peace activists and deporting them for engaging in pro-peace activities. In addition to the above, Eva Novakova, a Czech activist, also with ISM, was detained in Ramallah and deported in January. And just yesterday, the Israeli court extended the detention of Mr. Murad Sinj, a Turkish activist, for an additional 25 days. In addition to the threat of detention, Israel is also using punitive measures, such as travel bans, to limit the movement of peace activists and advocates, such as the six-month travel ban arbitrarily imposed on the Palestinian map expert, Khalil Tafakji, who heads the Arab Studies Society's Mapping and Geographic Information Systems Department.

Such intimidation and assaults by the occupying Power on pro-peace activists are clearly aimed at discouraging principled activists around the world from coming to the Occupied Palestinian Territory to protect the principles of justice and freedom as well as international laws and norms. Moreover, repeated Israeli incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas in the West Bank are clearly part of another ill-willed attempt to undermine the Palestinian Authority and its successful efforts to enforce the rule of law in Palestinian cities, towns and villages under its control.

These punitive, illegal and provocative measures are a stark testament to the real anti-peace agenda the current right-wing government in Israel is now advancing on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Ironically, Israel, the occupying Power, is blatantly combating peaceful activism against its illegal actions and continued occupation while at the same time it is stepping up those illegal activities, including the expansion of its illegal settlements throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem.

This situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory requires serious redress by the international community, which should defend peace activists as well as the principles of international humanitarian law that they strive to defend by their modest means. This is an international responsibility that has far-reaching moral and legal ramifications.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 355 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 12 January 2010 (A/ES-10/475-S/2010/22), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations